

Senate equally divided 50-50, is going to be a positive force in bringing this Nation back together after this session of Congress comes to a close.

Mr. President, I yield the floor to my colleague from Minnesota, Senator WELLSTONE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank my colleague from Illinois.

VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I submit for the RECORD the names of those Americans who exactly 1 year ago were killed by gunfire.

It has been more than a year since the Columbine tragedy, but still this Republican Congress refuses to act on sensible gun legislation.

Since Columbine, thousands of Americans have been killed by gunfire. Until we act, Democrats in the Senate will read the names of some of those who have lost their lives to gun violence in the past year, and we will continue to do so every day that the Senate is in session.

In the name of those who died, we will continue this fight. Following are the names of some of the people who were killed by gunfire one year ago today:

December 6, 1999: Shyheem Abraham, 17, Philadelphia, PA; Godofredo Carmenate, 70, Miami-Dade County, FL; Mike D'Alessandro, 32, Philadelphia, PA; John Davis, 18, Gary, IN; Norman Dotson, 33, Detroit, MI; Bernie Graham, 29, Fort Worth, TX; Latnaia Jefferies, 27, Gary, IN; James Jones III, 24, Baltimore, MD; Lorraine Lawhorn, 45, Knoxville, TN; Tavares Lavor McNeil, 22, Baltimore, MD; Emmett Outlaw, 76, Memphis, TN; Chester Roscoe, 28, Rochester, NY; Tavrise Tate, 20, Chicago, IL; and Antonio Thompson, 21, Charlotte, NC.

One of the victims of gun violence I mentioned, 45-year-old Lorraine Lawhorn of Knoxville, was shot and killed by one of her coworkers who recently had been fired. The gunman shot Lorraine in the back of the head.

We cannot sit back and allow such senseless gun violence to continue. The deaths of these people are a reminder to all of us that we need to enact sensible gun legislation now.

Mr. President, am I correct that we have 5 minutes left in morning business, and then we will be going to the bankruptcy bill?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I will speak on the bankruptcy bill in a moment. But in the time I have in morning business, I will speak on another matter. I do not have any statistics with me, but maybe that is better; I can talk about it in more personal or human terms.

In 1997, we passed the Balanced Budget Act with much acclaim. To be very bipartisan about this, President Clinton was very much for it. I think many Democrats and Republicans voted for it. But what has happened is—with the benefit of some time for observation and, hopefully, reflection—the cuts in Medicare have been draconian and have had a very harsh effect on health care, the quality of health care in our States, for Minnesota, Rhode Island, and all across the country.

It does not do any good to look back and affix blame. The point is, last year we said we were going to fix this problem. I think Senators—Democrats and Republicans alike—have heard from people back in their States.

In my State of Minnesota, here is the effect of this. First of all, in our rural communities, in what we call greater Minnesota outside the metro area, in the absence of getting some decent Medicare reimbursement, where you have a disproportionate number of elderly people living who are dependent on health care, the cost of providing that health care runs ahead of the reimbursement. The hospitals are losing money.

Here is the problem. This is not the case of greedy hospitals or greedy doctors. As a matter of fact, they have a very low profit margin. In fact, many hospitals have gone under over the last several years. When the hospital is no longer there, that is the beginning of the death of a community because people do not raise their children in communities unless there are good schools and good hospitals and good health care.

So we are in a real crisis, which should be spelled in capital letters, in the State of Minnesota, where many of our rural health care providers will go under unless we fix this problem, which is a problem we created. The same thing can be said for nursing homes, where there is inadequate reimbursement. The same thing can be said for home health care providers. The same thing can be said for medical education, which is financed, believe it or not, in part out of Medicare. The cuts in the reimbursement have led to a very serious situation in all of our States—certainly in Minnesota.

Then there are those hospitals—Hennepin County Medical Center is a perfect example; it is a very good public hospital; there are not a lot of them left—that, in fact, provide medical care to a disproportionate number of poor people in America. These hospitals are really having a difficult time making it. They are not going to continue to be financially solvent because we have so cut the reimbursement that they do not have the financial stability.

We never should have done this, but we did.

Then last year, we passed a piece of legislation. I feel kind of guilty about this. I didn't think it 100-percent fixed the problem, but I thought it did more than it did. So I went back to meet

with people. We all go back to our States. We should. We meet with people in communities. We want to do well for people.

I said: Listen, I think this is going to really help. To the best of my ability, I talked about what this package was. But as it turns out, it, at best, I think, dealt with about 10 percent of the cuts, somewhere in that neighborhood.

We should not leave here—I want to go home, believe me. I want to go home. I would love to be back home. I would love not to be here right now, although I am always happy to be in the Senate. It is an honor. But you know what I am saying.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I have 2 more minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WELLSTONE. If we just put everything off and have a continuing resolution until next year and we do not fix this problem, it will be irresponsible.

There is one proposal—that tends to be the Republican proposal, as I understand it—that gives a lot more of the money over the next 5 years to managed care plans without any requirement that they be accountable and that they serve senior citizens and serve people who live in rural communities, which they do not do now. Too many managed care plans have cut loose people they are supposed to be helping, and that is not the answer.

We have a package—I believe it is a Democratic package; it can be Democratic, Republican, anybody's package for all I care; I just want to get it done—which is \$40 billion over the next 5 years, which does put the emphasis on getting the resources back to our rural health care providers and home health care providers and nursing homes and public hospitals and medical education, all of which is essential to whether or not we are going to be able to provide people with humane, dignified, and quality health care.

This is an important family issue. This is an important people issue. This is an important Minnesota issue. This is an important national security issue. We ought to get the job done before we leave.

Mr. President, it is my understanding that we now have concluded with morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUTCHINSON). The Senator's time has expired.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

BANKRUPTCY REFORM ACT OF 2000—CONFERENCE REPORT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of the conference